

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC The Alamo

AND/OR COMMON

The Alamo

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER Alamo Plaza

CITY, TOWN

San Antonio

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

20th

STATE

Texas

CODE

48

COUNTY

Bexar

CODE

029

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME State of Texas, adm by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas

STREET &amp; NUMBER

The Alamo

CITY, TOWN

San Antonio

VICINITY OF

STATE

Texas

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE, BEXAR COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET &amp; NUMBER

South Main Street 1 block south of Commerce Street

CITY, TOWN

San Antonio

STATE

Texas

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Historic American Building Survey (15 photos)

DATE

1936

☒ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress/Annex

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT  
☒ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED  
☒ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The mission church of San Antonio de Valero, later called The Alamo, was begun in 1744 and finished in 1757, together with an extensive mission enclosure that included shops, dwellings and storehouses for the Indians.

Built of stone, the main body of the church was roofed by a barrel vault and dome. It also had symmetrical towers flanking the facade. In 1762, however, only five years after completion, the towers, nave vaulting and dome collapsed and the church was never fully repaired. The buildings fell progressively into decay and at the time of the siege in 1836 were in most cases roofless ruins.

The chapel, located on the southeast extremity of the enclosure, was 75 feet long, 62 feet wide and 22 1/2 feet high, with walls of solid masonry, 4 feet thick. Northwest of the chapel, but joined to it by a wall about 50 feet long and 12 feet high, was the convent of the mission, sometimes known as the monastery, long barracks or fortress. That imposing two-story stone building was 186 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 18 feet high; its upper story was used as a hospital, the lower floor for an armory and soldiers' quarters. From the northeast corner of the chapel a barrier wall extended northward before turning west to join the long barracks and enclose an inner court. From the southwest corner of the church a strongly built stockade protruded 75 feet to the low barracks, a one-story structure, 144 feet in length and 17 feet in width which formed part of the main wall on the south. Both of the barracks had walls of about 30 inches thick, and each had flat terraced roofs of beams and planks, covered with a thick coat of cement. The mission's outer barrier walls, about 33 inches thick and 9 to 12 feet high, surrounded an area of about 462 by 162 feet west of the convent and north of the low barracks. The north wall, however was longer than that of the south so a perfect parallelogram was not formed.

In 1848 the United States Government renovated the Alamo complex to use as a Quartermaster's department, rebuilding the gable of the chapel facade and constructing a roof over the old south tower of the convent building. In 1877 Honore Grenet purchased the convent portion adding porticos to the south and west sides to give the appearance of the old arcades of a Spanish styled convent. A second story of wood was placed above the stone walls.

The single arched openings of the chapel itself, flanked by paired engaged columns is a compositional device which occurs in numerous Mexican churches, and although the Alamo has no figural sculpture it does have niches between the columns, and at the bottom of each is a pedestal which at one time had statues in them according to an early description. Compared to the richness of some Mexican churches, and other mission chapels, the Alamo portal is relatively simple and severe, yet for its provincial setting it has considerable plastic

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      1744, 1836

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Mission San Antonio de Valero was established in 1718 by Franciscan Friars. The existing mission church, now known as the Alamo, was begun in 1744 and finished in 1757. During the Texan War for Independence the chapel became the site of one of the most famous battles in the history of United States Expansion. The death of the Alamo's some 187 defenders, including the famed frontiersmen James Bowie and David Crockett won sympathy for the Texan cause in the United States and strengthened the will to throw off Mexican domination ..

### HISTORY

Founded in 1718 under Fray Antonio de Olivares, the Mission San Antonio de Valero was first situated on the east bank of the river. In 1724 it was moved to its present site. Construction on the famous chapel was begun in 1744 but five years after its completion in 1757, the church's twin towers collapsed, leaving it roofless and filled with debris.

In 1793 the mission was abandoned and its archives were moved to San Fernando Church. Around 1803 the Flying Company of San Carlos de Parras, a company of Spanish soldiers from Alamo del Parras, Coahuila, Mexico, arrived at San Antonio and occupied the mission for a number of years during Mexico's struggle for independence. They called the mission Fort Alamo in honor of their former station, probably giving rise to the popular name of the chapel. The Alamo was occupied by Mexican forces from 1821 to December, 1835, when the army under General Martin Perfecto de Cos surrendered the fort to Texan forces.

The divided state of command and authority which afflicted the government of the Texans resulted in the tragedy at both the Alamo and Goliad. Early in January, 1836, the Texans had information that Santa Anna was leading a large force to invade Texas and subdue the Americans in retaliation for the humiliating defeat the Mexicans had received earlier at the Alamo and Lipantitlan. Houston was in favor of withdrawing to east Texas to consolidate an Army. Fannin, Grant, and Johnson, who also claimed command of all Texan forces, wanted to meet the enemy on the border and keep the war out of Texas. This resulted in no positive action until it was too late. On February 23, Santa Anna appeared before San Antonio with approximately 5000 men, where only a small garrison of about 145 men under Colonel Travis remained. Travis

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Ables, L. Robert, "The Second Battle for the Alamo," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, January, 1967.
2. McCaleb, Walter F., Spanish Missions of Texas, San Antonio, 1954.
3. Morrison, Hugh, Early American Architecture, New York, 1952.
4. Pierson, William H. Jr., American Buildings and Their Architects: The Colonial and Neo-Classical Styles, Garden City, N.Y., 1970.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c 5

UTM REFERENCES

A 1 4 5 4 9 8 8 0 3 4 5 3 0 2 0  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
C                                             

B                                               
ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
D                                             

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The Alamo and its grounds are contained within one block bounded on the north by Houston Street, on the east by Nacogdoches Street, on the south by East Crocket Street and on the west by North Alamo Street. Only the Alamo itself and the remaining section of original wall are part of the landmark. The library and museum are recent additions and do not contribute to the significance of the landmark.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Patricia Heintzelman, Architectural Historian, Landmark Review Project

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey

DATE

5/9/75

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L. Street

TELEPHONE

523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL   

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS)

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Landmark  
Designated Dec 19, 1960  
date

Boundary Certified  
George J. ...  
3/8/77  
date

3/4/77  
date

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richness, especially in such individual parts as the spiral columns and in the sharp interlacing of linear ornament which rests loosely on the surface wall. This ornament, which breaks in lacelike patterns around the niches and the door, is particularly Spanish and may be traced back to the intricate interlace ornament introduced into Spain during the years of Moorish occupation.

In 1920, a metal roof was put over the chapel and the woodwork of the side and rear doors and windows was replaced. In 1936, money was appropriated by the State to complete the purchase of the block and work was begun to convert the area to a park.

From 1905 until 1912, a controversy raged over how the ~~Alamo~~ was to be restored. In the Spring of 1912, Governor Colquitt began his restoration work by removing all of the Hugo-Schmeltzer building with the exception of the outer two-story masonry of the west and south walls which were part of the original convent. F.E. Giesecke, a professor of architecture at the University of Texas, designed plans for the restoration of the convent, based on the 1849 renovation work of the United States Quartermaster's department. Rebuilt on the original foundation, the east wall facing the convent courtyard featured a chain of arched doorways on the first level. The second story of the east wall was never rebuilt because of lack of funding. Later, while the governor was out of the state, the lieutenant governor permitted opposing San Antonio authorities to tear down the walls of the upper story. All that remained of the governor's restoration work was the east wall; all that remained of the original convent was the first story masonry of the west and south walls.

The chapel in its present form appears as it did in 1849. The building is cruciform in plan, with buttressed side walls, shallow transepts and a square sanctuary. On the right, immediately inside the entrance, is the baptistry; opposite it on the left is the confessional. The second door to the left leads to a chamber called the monks' burial room, which opens into the sacristy. The structure now houses paintings depicting scenes during the battle of the Alamo and portraits of its defenders, as well as artifacts from the Texas Revolution.

Today only the chapel, the restored ruins of two living quarters and the wall along the sidewalk from Houston Street toward the chapel remain of the original mission compound. The other original structures have been obliterated by the erection of modern buildings. A museum and library have been built within the Alamo park compound.

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withdrew into the Alamo and was besieged by Santa Anna's vastly superior force.

The siege began on February 24. Travis took full command because of the illness of Bowie. On March 1, the only reinforcements, thirty-two men from Gonzales, entered the fort. For defense of the fortifications, Travis had approximately 187 men and eighteen or more pieces of artillery. The siege lasted thirteen days with the climax occurring on the morning of March 6. Mexican forces stormed the Alamo on all sides, overwhelming the Texans and penetrating into the interior of the fortress. Bowie was killed on his cot and Crocket died with his Tennessee men defending a position assigned to him by Travis. Within about one-half-hour all the Texans were killed in the room to room combat and the bodies were burned by order of Santa Anna. Survivors included about fifteen noncombatants, mostly women and children. According to the best historical sources Mexican losses were 1,544.

After the fall of the Alamo, the building was practically in ruins, but no attempt was made at that time to restore it. The Republic of Texas passed an act in 1841, granting the church of the Alamo to the Roman Catholic church. In 1848 the Church leased the entire property to the United States Government which used the building and grounds for quartermasters purposes until the Civil War when Confederate troops used the building. At the close of the war the United States government again took over and used it until 1872.

In 1877, Honore Grenet purchased the convent portion of the mission from the Church. After Grenet's death, the convent was sold in 1886 to Hugo and Schmeltzer Company, a whole sale grocery firm.

In the meantime, the State of Texas bought the chapel from the Church in 1883 and placed it under the care of the City of San Antonio. This system continued until 1905, when the Texas Legislature passed a resolution ordering the governor to purchase that part of the old Alamo fortress occupied by a business concern and that all the property should be given to the Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

A controversy over custody of the Alamo developed between the DRT and the De Zavala Chapter of that organization at San Antonio. There was also a dispute between the DRT and Governor O.B. Colquitt, concerning restoration and demolition of the property leased by Hugo and Schmeltzer. The Alamo stands today as it was left at the end of this battle, with the chapel and one side of the lower wall of the convent left standing. The area has been landscaped and is now a park.

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Major Bibliographical References

5. Ramsdell, Charles, San Antonio, A Historical and Pictorial Guide, Austin, Texas, 1959.
6. Sanford, Trent E., The Architecture of the Old Southwest, New York, 1950.
7. State Building Commission, Archeological Program, "Historic Background of the Mission San Antonio deValero," November, 1966.
8. Tinkle, Lon, Six Missions of Texas, Waco, 1965.